BAPTISTERY IN THE CATHEDRAL OF SIENNA.—THE FONT.

THE baptistery of Sienna, attached to the absis of the cathedral, is situated, in consequence of the picturesque position of the edifice, about 60 feet below the floor of the church, and is reached by a large lateral staircase outside the absis. The interior decoration of the baptistery, arranged in modern style, offers nothing remarkable, and contrasts strikingly with the richness and elegance of the graceful specimen of the Italian *renaissance* which our engraving illustrates, namely, the font.

This is composed of an hexagonal cube of marble (each face of which is 3 feet wide) 3 feet 4 inches high above the two steps on which it is elevated. The angles of this cube are occupied by Gothic niches, which contain beautiful statuettes of bronze, gilt, attributed to John of Bologna, as are the bas-reliefs on the faces, which recal, by the composition and the perfection of the details, the beautiful gates of the baptistery of Florence.

The frieze of the upper part and that of the plinth are in blue enamel; the upper frieze bears a consecratory inscription in gold, and the lower one a running ornament, also in gold.

In the centre of the cube rises an hexagonal group of white marble columns, supporting a tabernacle of the same form, enriched with sculptured figures, and above at the angles of the entablature are six statuettes of angels: the whole is terminated by the statue of St. John in marble. The height to the foot of the statue is 16 feet 2 inches; to the cornice of the tabernacle 9 feet.

ARCHITECTURE AT THE ROYAL ACADEMY.

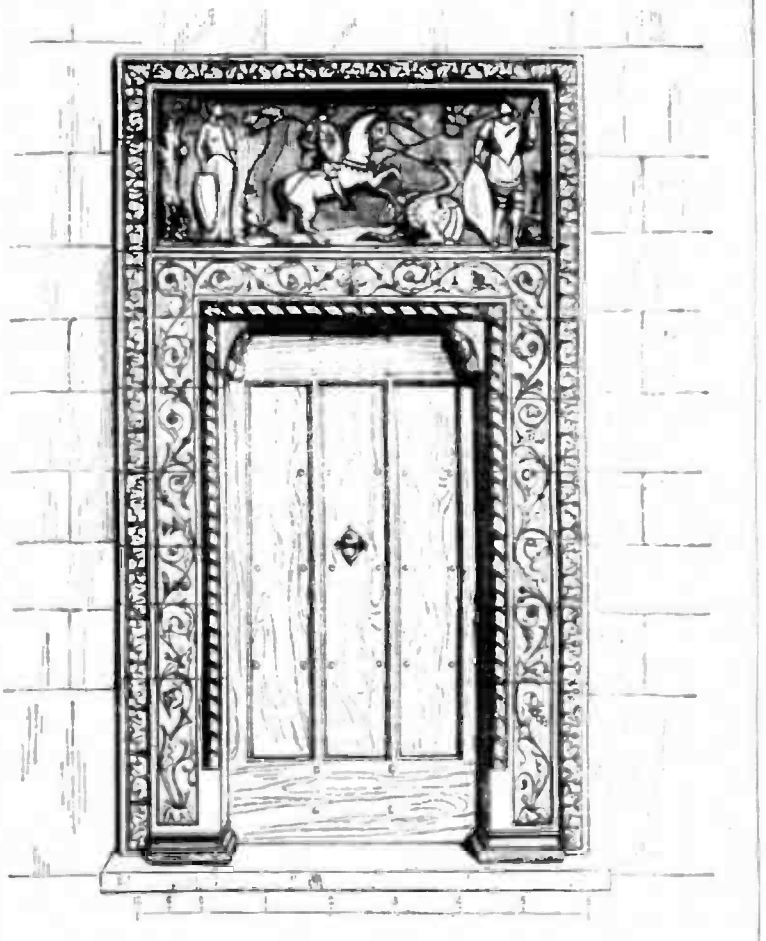
THE review of the Academy exhibition in the *Art-Journal* contains this remark:—"On the subject of architecture, as shown in the Royal Academy, we refer our readers to a series of able articles in our zealous and judicious contemporary, THE BUILDER, again, however, expressing our opinion that *these works have no business here.*"

A correspondent, apparently much excited by this, says—"I hope the compliment thrown out to yourself in the *Art-Journal* will not deter you from standing up boldly for your own 'order,' and censuring the cool impudence of that publication when it goes so far as to say that architectural designs ought not to find a place in the Royal Academy's exhibitions. It is matter which you ought to take up strenuously, and speak out fearlessly upon. You will surely not allow such a slur to be cast upon a branch of art, that your own journal professes to support and encourage, without reprobating the insult in the severest terms!"

We need no such incentive to our duty, still less such ill-natured and foolish remarks as follow in the letter,—nor are we likely to be prevented from saying what we think right, even by the kind expressions of our friend of the *Art-Journal*. We are not of those, however, who go into a passion because all will not think as we do. We believe that the *Art-Journal* is as wrong in the opinion referred to as ever it was right in others, and the same was said in our pages some time ago, when the journal in question objected to the election of architects as academicians. But this opinion, being honestly formed, deserves fair treatment, and may surely be discussed without calling names, or imputing motives.

THE BRITTON CLUB.—A dinner was given to the club on Monday last by Mr. Thomas Cubitt, at Clapham, and as it included several of the principal builders of the metropolis, Mr. Sheriff Cubitt, M.P., Mr. Cuthill, Mr. Grissell, Mr. Herbert, and Mr. Piper, deserves especially a brief record in our pages. The other guests were the Rev. Mr. Andrews, Mr. Britton, Mr. Gibbon, Mr. Godwin, Mr. Sheriff Hill, Mr. Hopgood, Mr. L. C. Humfrey, Q.C., Mr. W. Jerdan, and Mr. W. Tooke, F.R.S. Without intending to repeat what is said at meetings which are private, rather than public, we may mention that "The prosperity of the Building Interests" was nicely given by Mr. Jerdan, and responded to by Mr. Grissell.

ENRICHED DOORWAY, GENOA.



RENAISSANCE DOORWAY, GENOA.

THE beautiful doorway represented above is in the *Place St. Ambroise*, Genoa, and belongs to the period of the *renaissance*. The material is marble, and it is very elegantly sculptured. It is surmounted by a bas-relief, representing St. George and the dragon.

ON DECORATIONS IN TEMPERA

DECORATIVE ART SOCIETY.

AT a recent meeting of this society, a paper "On Decorations in Tempera" was read by Mr. Dwyer, V.P. This paper, it was said, emanated through a necessity which exists for a more definite classification of various methods of painting as applied to the decorative arts; and the example set by the Fine Arts Commission, in pointing out for notice and practice certain methods seldom adopted in modern times, was mentioned as being a step in the right direction. The evils resulting from the present partial system of education in the arts, were alluded to as being generally evident in the professional practice of our artists, and it was contended that more ample and varied means for study should be made accessible to all who require to understand the subject. It was urged that such a system would not engender superficiality, nor would it induce a waste of the student's time in fruitless speculations to a mischievous extent, but it would inevitably establish an enlarged circle of information upon the arts. He desired to have a general system of education in arts, as in literature, for all who require to understand the variety of means by which to best attain a given end. A knowledge of different materials must, he said, increase the powers of expression; for by simply extending an acquaintance with the materials, facilities for correct and forcible expression must occur, and the artist of general acquirements would ordinarily adopt that method which is the most suitable for his purpose.

The manner of applying colours in the arts has varied much in the different epochs of history, and it is not difficult to trace therefore those distinctive qualities in which may be recognised relative fitness of purpose. Mr. Dwyer described the method of colouring "in tempera," and the various vehicles or media used for rendering the colours adhesive and permanent. Some useful details respecting the practical management of the colours were mentioned, and the treatment of them in application with gums, &c., to produce certain glazed effects, was explained. Among the advantages assumed for painting in tempera, that of readily and economically producing upon a large surface an even colour and texture, was especially adverted to, and its application, as seen in the form of paper-hangings, was said to equal in effect that of any other medium whatever. The scenery of theatres (always painted in tempera), it was observed, illustrated the power and richness of effects obtainable, as well as the rapid facility with which decorations of a refined and picturesque character might be produced for domestic interiors. It was contended that the opportunities for introducing artistic refinement through such simple and economical additions to our ordinary wall decorations, ought not to be any longer overlooked, as vignettes, landscapes, &c. can be produced easily, quickly, cheaply, and well, in this manner. He did not wish to have coarseness mistaken for boldness, but to re-

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